



Wine of the Year #1: Joe's Pick – 1993 JB Becker Walkenberg Spatlese Trocken

Posted by Joe Salamone on December 3, 2014

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1993 JB Becker
Walkenberg Spätlese Trocken
Riesling at its Most Mysterious
and Heartfelt

There are no wines in Germany
like J.B. Becker's.

They represent some of the most heartfelt and mysterious wines being made in Germany. I have no trouble singling out Becker's 1993 Wallufer Walkenberg Spätlese Trocken as one of the most memorable bottles that I've tasted all year.

Becker's wines are beautifully (and brutally) honest.

Nothing is done for immediate appeal – **they are German dry Rieslings that assume and demand proper aging.** We're really happy that Becker has a fairly deep library of back-vintages.

We love and sell a lot of dry Riesling. **Still, it's very rare to find aged versions of dry Riesling, especially with perfect provenance and at this price.**

The '93 Walkenberg Spätlese Trocken shows Becker in all its glory. You're introduced to a spectrum of textures and flavors that you never encounter in Rheingau Riesling. The wine boasts a



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deep, saline minerality and notes of tobacco, citrus, moss and a deep, building savoriness. Above all, it's a wine of subtle complexity, sturdy acids and gripping palate presence.



Becker's wines made me look at the Rheingau with a fresh set of eyes. The historic region had provided many epic bottles from three or four decades ago, but until discovering Becker's wines, I'd struggled to find anything really exciting currently in the region.

A lot of this has to be credited to Becker's singular take on the Rheingau. Hans Josef Becker, who is currently at the helm of the estate, has focused on dry Riesling since his first vintage in 1971. He practices what is probably best called idiosyncratic traditionalism. The wines spend a long time in large casks, many of them the 2,000 liter doppelstucks, as people did back in the day. **These are wines that undoubtedly have an "old-fashioned" feel to them. However, that alone won't account for Becker's unique vision and stubbornness.** The story is that when he took over the family domaine and concentrated on dry Rieslings, they lost 50% of their customers.

Becker organically farms vines in Eltviller Sonnenberg and Wallufer Walkenberg. While Eltviller Sonnenberg is the more famous of the two, **Wallufer Walkenberg**, where he has choice parcels with many old vines, **is undoubtedly Becker's flagship site.**

Becker's '93 Walkenberg Spätlese Trocken is one of the most challenging and compelling wines that I've tasted all year. I'm really fond of the wine not only for its outright quality, but also its stirring soulfulness and its eye-opening individuality.

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Joe Salamone
Wine Buyer
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